

Mrs. Kennedy Clashes With Chief of Harper's

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NEW YORK, Dec. 19—Mrs. John F. Kennedy clashed tonight with one of her oldest friends in the publishing world over a controversial book about her husband's assassination.

In a statement issued by her spokesman here, the President's widow maintained that the dispute centers on her right and that of her children "to live with a minimum of privacy and dignity free of the publication of intimate details of their lives at a time of great sorrow."

"No amount of rhetoric about historical accuracy or the public's 'right to know' can alter the nature of this controversy," Mrs. Kennedy's statement continued.

Mrs. Kennedy thus replied to an earlier assertion by the book's publisher's Harper & Row, that it still intends to bring out William Manchester's "The Death of a President" in the interest of "historical accuracy and of the people's right to know."

The Harper statement was

issued by Cass Canfield, the father-in-law of Mrs. Kennedy's younger sister, Princess Lee Radziwill, during her first marriage to his son, Michael.

Canfield said his experience with the book, initially commissioned by the Kennedy family and due to be serialized by Look magazine within a month, was "the most trying and distressing one" within the scope of his 40-year publishing career.

While joining Manchester "in defending the book's right to live," Canfield, chairman of Harper's executive committee, stressed "how badly I feel that Mrs. Kennedy is upset."

But from Mrs. Kennedy's
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A look at Look's printing
plant. Page A-8.

KENNEDY—From Page A1

Mrs. Kennedy, Harper's Chief Clash

side the issue was stated as "whether Mr. Manchester and the publishers broke the written agreement from which breach enormous profits will apparently flow."

The statement added that the details that Mrs. Kennedy is seeking to suppress through court action "bear no conceivable relation to history."

For his part Canfield noted that members of the Kennedy family were "understandably" unwilling to read the Manchester draft. "Had they read it themselves," he added, "the present situation might have been avoided."

The Kennedy statement, however, asserted that both Manchester, the 44-year-old author, and the publisher "knew that Mrs. Kennedy was well aware of the personal passages to which she objected."

The statement further recalled that the widow had spoken directly to Manchester—during an emotion tinged meeting at her summer home in Hyannis Port last August—to outline her objections to those parts of the manuscript that she felt "unnecessarily invaded her privacy and that of her children."

Even as these charges were raised, Mrs. Kennedy's worst fears were being realized through the piecemeal appearance of the very material from the Manchester book—concerning her reactions to her husband's death—that she has sued to delete from the final copy.

In mid-July, while she was vacationing, 25 copies of the Manchester text were circu-

lated among six national magazines. The highest bidder, Look, purchased the serial rights for a record \$665,000, thus precipitating the current controversy.

The exchange of statements reflected the lawyers' inability to settle the dispute. A hearing in New York State Supreme Court on Mrs. Kennedy's plea for an injunction against the publishers is scheduled for Dec. 27.

A source close to Mrs. Kennedy expressed pessimism over prospects for an accord before further court action. While contacts continued among the attorneys involved, the source said that these exchanges could not be termed "negotiations."

Mrs. Kennedy, according to the informant, is still pressing for the deletion of some 5000 words from the 80,000-word Manchester text scheduled to be published by Look in four installments starting Jan. 10. These outright cuts were held to be Mrs. Kennedy's "minimum terms."

In the meantime, Sen. Robert F. Kennedy (D-N.Y.) told a New York Post reporter that "the parts that are being objected to would really only affect about four pages" of Manchester's 300,000-word book.

The Senator, who spent part of the day skiing alone on the slopes at Sun Valley, Idaho, said in the telephone interview his sister-in-law's objections to the manuscript "were the kind of intimate personal details that she otherwise would have obviously kept to herself."

"It was one thing (for the material) to be on tape for the

historians," Kennedy went on. "It was something else to have it written down for you to see. It's not a matter of re-writing history; the material will be available in the Kennedy (Memorial) Library for the historians of the future who want to find out about our time."

Kennedy also cited the accord he had signed with Manchester in March, 1964, that led to the two-year, family-authorized project. The agreement with the author, concluded while Kennedy was serving as Attorney General, gave both him and the President's widow the right to approve the text before publication.

"The agreement was made," Kennedy noted. "If Manchester felt he couldn't abide by it, he should have said so then, not now—not two and a half years later."

The Senator conceded, however, that there is "a legitimate argument" over whether such an agreement to write about the assassination should have been entered into in the first place.

Before former White House Press Secretary Pierre Salinger, acting for the family, contacted Manchester, two other men were sounded out: Theodore H. White, who wrote "The Making of the President—1960" and a similar book in 1964, and Walter Lord, the author of "Day of Infamy" and a host of other best-selling historical accounts.

Both authors declined to work on the project, in part because the Kennedy family insisted upon retaining final review rights of the book.